

RENFREWSHIRE VALUATION JOINT BOARD



SUPPORTING MENOPAUSE AT WORK POLICY HR30

Title	Supporting Menopause at Work Policy
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Contents

Page Number

1.	Introduction	3
2.	Purpose of this policy	3
3.	Scope	3
4.	Menopause Stages	3
5.	Menopause Symptoms	4
6.	Supports and Paid Leave	4
7.	Supporting Menopause Guidance	5
8.	Supporting Each Other	5
9.	Confidentiality	6
10.	Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment	6
11.	Monitoring and Review	6

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Renfrewshire Valuation Joint Board wants to support colleagues' wellbeing at every stage of life and we recognise many female colleagues will be working through the perimenopause and menopause transition and managing symptoms at work. We know that many people feel uncomfortable talking about their perimenopause and menopause, which means that some women suffer in silence while experiencing a wide range of symptoms that affect their physical as well as mental health.
- 1.2 Whilst research shows that menopause normally takes place between 45 and 55 years of age as oestrogen levels drop, we understand the timings and symptoms are different for everyone. In the UK, the average age for a woman to reach the menopause is 51 years old. However, for some women menopause occurs earlier or later than this.
- 1.3 While this Policy uses the term 'women' to talk about people who may experience perimenopause and menopause transition, we know that it can impact trans or non-binary colleagues. We will support all colleagues experiencing perimenopause and menopause transition, so we encourage colleagues to ask for help if they need it.

2. Purpose of this Policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this Policy is to provide support to women with menopause, to raise awareness of what menopause is and to help you discuss this openly and confidently, should you wish to do so. We hope this helps to ensure that if you do experience menopause, you receive the right support at work when it's needed.

3. Scope

- 3.1 The policy applies to all RVJB colleagues. Advice and guidance on this and other support and leave provisions are available from RVJB's Personnel Practitioner, the Assistant Assessor and all relevant policies are held on RVJB's document management system.

4. Menopause Stages

- 4.1 **Perimenopause** is the phase leading up to the menopause, when a woman's hormone balance starts to change. During this time a woman may start to suffer with menopause symptoms but is still having periods. Women are said to have reached the menopause when they haven't had a period for a year. The symptoms last on average for four years, but for some can last much longer.
- 4.2 **Menopause** can be defined as the biological stage in a woman's life that occurs when she stops menstruating and reaches the end of her natural reproductive life. It is sometimes called the 'change of life' and is a natural part of the ageing process because of a change in hormone levels, more specifically oestrogen. As a result of these hormonal changes many women can experience menopause symptoms.
- 4.3 **Early menopause** happens when a woman stops menstruating before the age of 45. **Premature menopause** starts before the age of 40 and can also be referred to as a "premature ovarian insufficiency". Early or premature menopause can be due to several reasons including family history, some health conditions (for example certain autoimmune diseases), medication or treatments (such as some received for cancer), surgery (for instance removal of the ovaries) and smoking.

5. Menopause Symptoms

- 5.1 Menopause is a personal experience. This is a natural part of the ageing process and can cause a wide range of symptoms that may last for several years. You may experience some symptoms with varied duration and severity, whereas others may experience no symptoms and may not require help or support.
- 5.2 Menopause symptoms can be both physical and psychological. Below is a non-exhaustive list of some of the symptoms may affect you at work:
- Hot flushes
 - Night sweats
 - Light or heavy periods
 - Headaches
 - Low mood
 - Memory and concentration problems
 - Muscle and joint stiffness and pain
 - Difficult sleeping
 - Tiredness

6. Supports and Paid Leave

- 6.1 We are committed to supporting you if you are experiencing symptoms of perimenopause or menopause transition. We understand that not everyone experiences menopause in the same way. Like any other health condition, your symptoms, and the support you may need may differ from others.
- 6.2 If you are experiencing symptoms and need support, you should speak to your line manager if you're comfortable to do so. Your manager can then discuss any workplace supports to help you, for example:
- Providing more breaks.
 - Making sure you've got access to cold water while you're working.
 - Making sure you've got easy access to toilet facilities.
 - Making sure the temperature is comfortable, providing a fan or access to fresh air.
 - Adjusting your uniform requirements or providing more items of uniform.
 - Giving you somewhere to store extra clothes or change of clothes during the day.
 - Working from home (where practical).
 - Changing your working hours if you're experiencing disturbed sleep (where practical).
- 6.3 There may also be times that your line manager can agree up to **5 days paid** menopause leave per year. This leave would normally be used for:
- Seeking support and advice from healthcare professionals or other organisations such as a specialist nurse or GP.
 - Attending related appointments for example, in relation to skin and/or hair changes or a sexual health clinic to discuss contraception.
 - Recovering from some of the more serious side effects of menopause.

If attending appointments, you will be asked to provide your line manager with some kind of confirmation of your appointment(s). If line managers are unsure about agreeing leave, they should take advice from RVJB's Personnel Practitioner before any agreement is made.

- 6.4 Paid leave will be pro-rated and can be taken in hours, half days or days.

7. Supporting Menopause Guidance

- 7.1 More guidance on menopause and the support available can be found in the 'Supporting Menopause Guidance'. All managers will be required to complete the appropriate e-learning training to support the fair and consistent application of this policy. Training covers:
- The symptoms of menopause.
 - Our roles and responsibilities.
 - Guidance to help you have a sensitive conversation.
 - Examples of workplace supports and support for employees.

8. Supporting Each Other

8.1 We're committed to taking all reasonable steps to make sure that we:

- Listen to you if you tell us about your perimenopause or menopause symptoms.
- Keep information about your health confidential.
- Support you if you're experiencing menopausal symptoms, by putting in place supports where needed.
- Treating you with respect, not making judgements or assumptions about you based on your age or because you've told us that you're in menopause transition.
- Treat any issues of bullying and harassment in relation to health issues associated with the menopause seriously.

9. Confidentiality

9.1 If you tell your manager or the Personnel Practitioner, they'll keep this information confidential and won't share it unless you give your consent, except if we've got serious concerns for your safety or that of others.

9.2 Information relating to menopause leave and confidential discussions linked to menopause will be recorded, maintained, and processed securely by the RVJB, HR & OD, and will be used only to monitor the effectiveness of this policy. All information will be processed in line with current UK data protection laws.

10. Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment

10.1 This policy has been impact assessed in line with RVJB's obligation to comply with the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty.

11. Monitoring and Review

11.1 This policy will be reviewed regularly and in line with any legislative and organisational changes. The recognised Trade Unions will be consulted on any future changes to this policy.